

# *Analysis of inclusive Wicca survey*

## Research methods

The survey was made available on 28 November 2016 and closed on 8 March 2017. It was publicised in several Facebook groups, the inclusive Wicca Discussion Group, and some closed groups for Gardnerian and Alexandrian initiates (not all of whom identify as inclusive).

The questions were based on the description of [what an inclusive coven looks like](#), which was a joint effort of members of the inclusive Wicca Discussion Group.

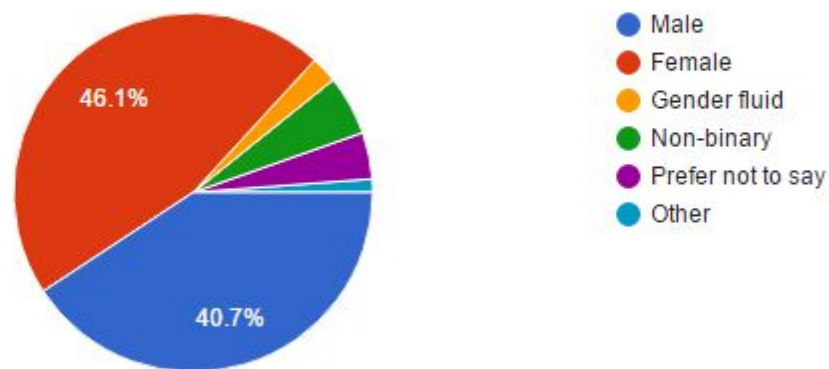
Some respondents criticised the statements and the use of a Likert scale, and said that I should have mixed up the statements more. All the statements were formatted as a desirable quality of inclusive Wicca, which respondents were invited to agree or disagree with.

Some people mentioned that they were not sure whether they were answering for Wicca as a whole, their tradition or lineage or coven as a whole, or their personal view. Some people would like to embrace same-sex initiation, for example, but felt that it would probably not be acceptable to other Wiccans.

## Demographic data

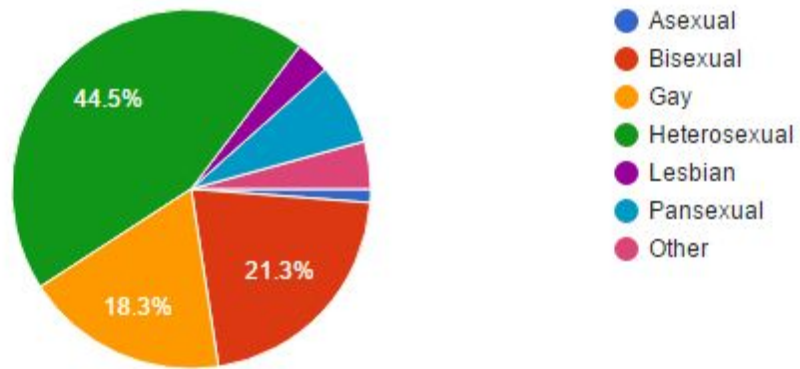
Most of the respondents identified as male or female, but 4 people were genderfluid, 9 were non-binary, 2 were other, and 7 people preferred not to say.

### Gender identity (167 responses)



164 respondents declared their sexual orientation. 44.5% were heterosexual, 18.3% gay, 21.3% bisexual, 3% lesbian, 7.3% pansexual, 2% asexual, and 4.3% other (one of whom wrote "straight... stop labelling"). So the LGBTQIA respondents outnumbered the heterosexuals. This may have been because LGBTQIA people feel more positive towards inclusive Wicca, but it may also reflect the high number of LGBTQIA people in Wicca. As the survey sample was self-selecting and respondents chose whether or not to complete the survey, it is hard to know how to interpret the very high proportion of LGBTQIA respondents. However, it has been suggested (on the basis of anecdotal evidence) that there is a higher percentage of LGBTQIA people in Wicca than in the general population.

## Sexual orientation (164 responses)



## Country of origin

This was a free-text field so I have had to tidy up the data a bit, e.g. changing “United States” to USA.

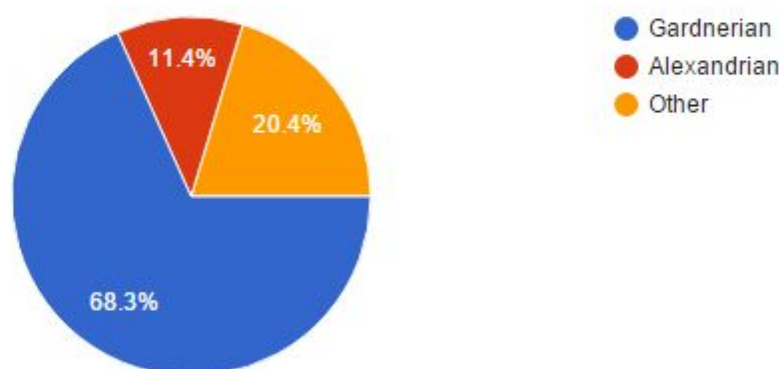
Australia	8
Basque Country	1
Canada	9
England	8
Germany	9
Ireland	5
Italy	1
Netherlands	2
Norway	1
Poland	1
Scotland	1
South Africa	1
Sweden	5
UK	21
USA	65
Wales	1
<i>Left blank</i>	28
<b>total</b>	<b>167</b>

I asked this question because I thought attitudes on some topics might be different between the USA and the rest of the world. Culturally, it is unclear whether to categorise Canada with the USA, but it does seem less conservative on a number of issues, according to a recent PEW survey. However, Gardnerian

and Alexandrian Wicca initially spread to Canada via the USA, so there are certain norms and expectations in common between the Wiccan communities in the two countries.

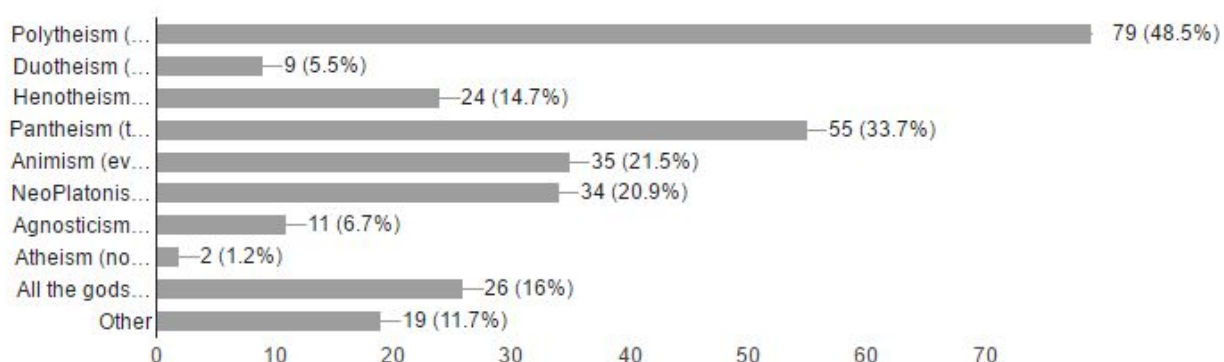
The majority of respondents were Gardnerian, with 11.4% Gardnerian, and the “other” category including things like Blue Star and Central Valley Wicca, and some dual-tradition Gardnerian/Alexandrian, or “Algards”.

### Tradition (167 responses)



Possibly the biggest surprise was the number of people who said their theology is polytheist. I didn't specify what I meant by polytheism beyond “many gods”, but still, a very high proportion of respondents (48.5%) said they are polytheist. The next biggest group was the pantheists, with 33.7%. There were more agnostics, NeoPlatonists, “other”, and henotheists than there were duotheists, unless you categorise the henotheists and people who ticked “all the gods are one God and all the goddesses are one Goddess” as duotheists, in which case this group would be 36.2% of the total. It should also be noted that people were allowed to tick more than one box for this question.

### What is your theological perspective? (163 responses)



## What is your theological perspective?

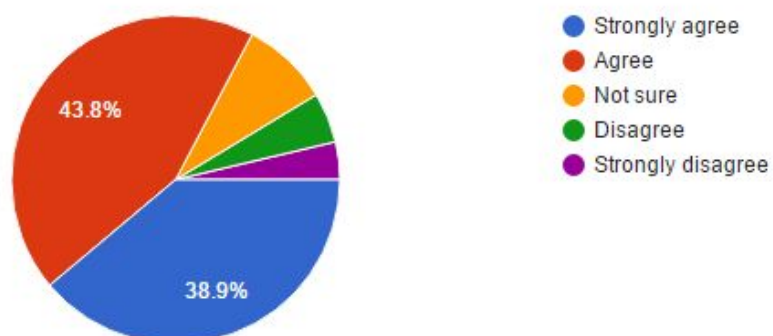
- ☐ Polytheism (many deities)
- ☐ Duotheism (one god and one goddess)
- ☐ Henotheism (there may be many deities, but we worship only two)
- ☐ Pantheism (the Divine is immanent in the world)
- ☐ Animism (everything has spirit / consciousness)
- ☐ NeoPlatonism (deities emanated from the Divine source)
- ☐ Agnosticism (I don't know)
- ☐ Atheism (no gods)
- ☐ All the gods are one god, and all the goddesses are one goddess

## Magical practice

The majority of respondents agreed that polarity can be made with any pair of opposites.

Polarity can be made by any pair of opposites (e.g. air and earth, water and fire, self and other, morning people and evening people, extroverts and introverts)

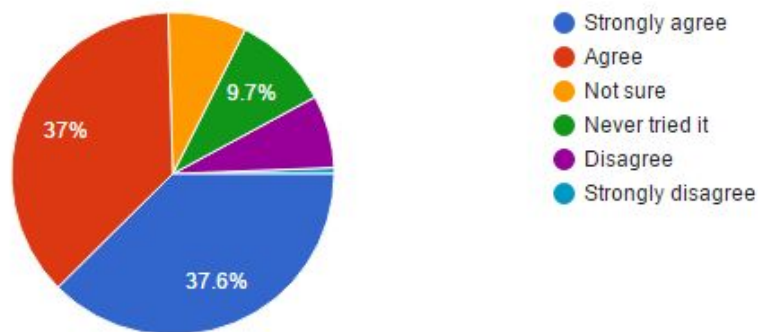
(162 responses)



The majority agreed that you can make energy with two similar people (one person strongly disagreed).

You can make energy with resonance (bringing two similar people together, e.g. two femme lesbians)

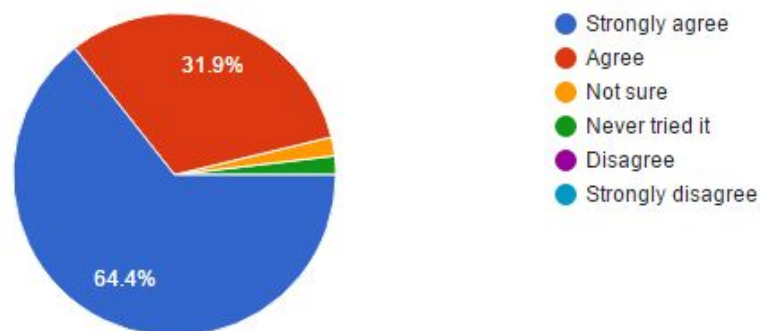
(165 responses)



The majority agreed that you can make energy with many people coming together.

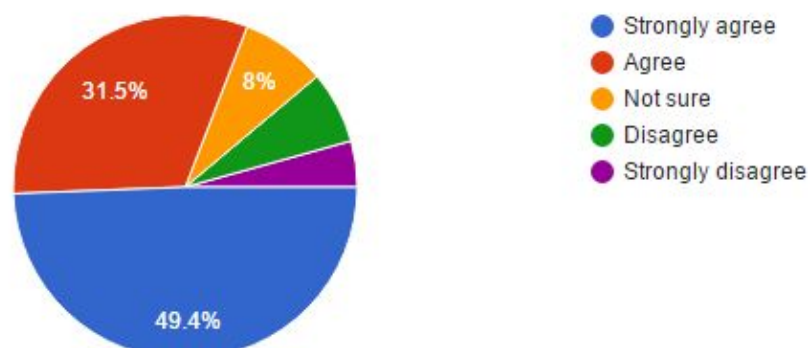
You can make energy using synergy (bringing lots of people together, and the whole is more than the sum of the parts)

(160 responses)



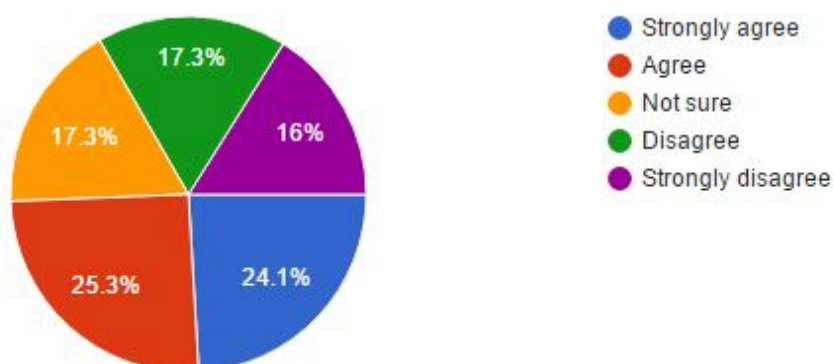
The majority agreed that fertility may also refer to creativity, with a higher proportion who disagree (6.8%) or strongly disagree (4.3%).

Fertility is not strictly biological and may refer to creativity (162 responses)



Opinion was much more divided on same-sex initiation; however, 49.4% agreed or strongly agreed that it is, and 17.3% were not sure, with 33.3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

### Same-sex initiation is a valid Wiccan practice (162 responses)



The picture gets more complex and interesting when we break down the responses by country and tradition, however.

Breakdown by area	
Country not specified, agree	13
Country not specified, view not stated	1
Country not specified, disagree	8
Country not specified, not sure	6
Rest of world, agree	24
Rest of world, view not stated	2
Rest of world, disagree	6
Rest of world, not sure	11
UK, agree	21
UK, view not stated	1
UK, disagree	6
UK, not sure	2
USA, agree	22
USA, view not stated	1
USA, disagree	34
USA, not sure	8

So a majority of the rest of the world (Canada, Australia, and mainland Europe) and the UK agrees that same-sex initiation is a valid Wiccan practice. 34 respondents who said they were from the USA disagreed that same-sex initiation was a valid Wiccan practice.

Breaking the responses down by tradition also gave interesting results.

Tradition + view	
BTW, Agree	5
BTW, disagree	4
Gardnerian, agree	46
Gardnerian, view not stated	3
Gardnerian, disagree	42
Gardnerian, not sure	24
Alexandrian, agree	14
Alexandrian, disagree	5
Alexandrian, not sure	2
Other, agree	15
Other, view not stated	2
Other, disagree	3
Other, not sure	1

Gardnerian respondents were fairly evenly divided with 46 agreeing that same-sex initiation is a valid practice, 42 disagreeing, 24 not sure, and 3 not stated (the response was left blank). Twenty-nine of the Gardnerians who disagreed were from the USA. Nine of the Gardnerians who agreed with SSI were from the USA. So, in this survey, most of the opposition to same sex initiation is coming from the USA.

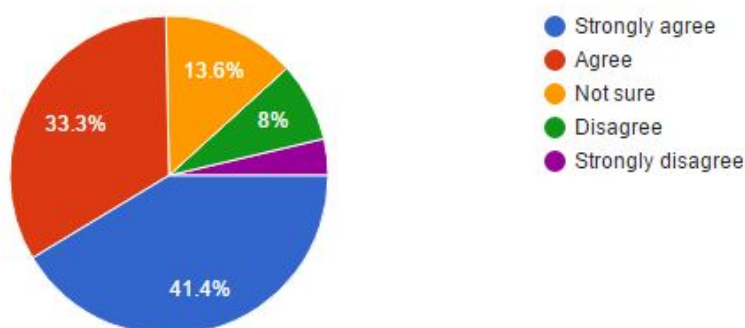
Other BTW traditions were also pretty evenly split.

The majority of Alexandrian respondents, and those from other traditions, agreed that same-sex initiation is a valid practice.

Other practices were less controversial, with 74.7% agreeing that a person of any gender can invoke a deity of any gender onto an invokee of any gender.

### A person of any gender can invoke a deity of any gender onto a person of any gender

(162 responses)

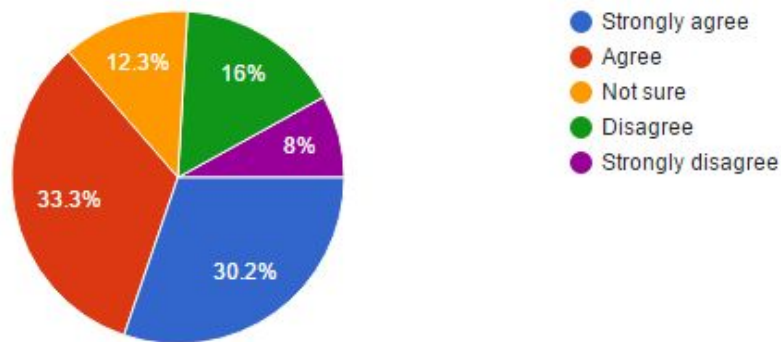


63.5% agreed that two people of any gender can do cakes and wine.



## C&W can be done by two people of any gender, using gender-neutral words

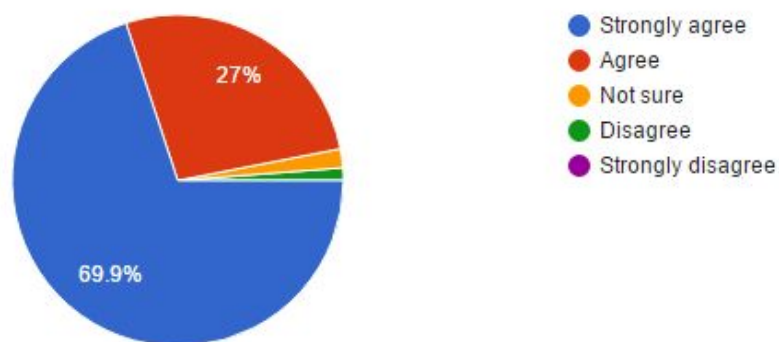
(162 responses)



96.9% agreed that Wiccan rituals can be adapted for people with physical disabilities.

## Wiccan rituals can be adapted for people with a physical disability (e.g. not kneeling)

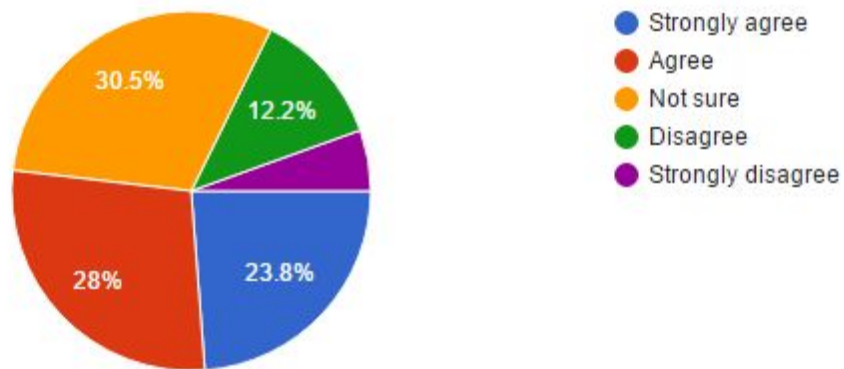
(163 responses)



The ethnicity of deity depictions question got a complex set of responses because some people pointed out, quite rightly, that a deity from a specific culture is already depicted as a specific ethnicity, so you obviously wouldn't want to change that. In this question, I meant that if we are depicting the Great Goddess or an all-encompassing God figure, then they should be depicted as a variety of ethnicities.

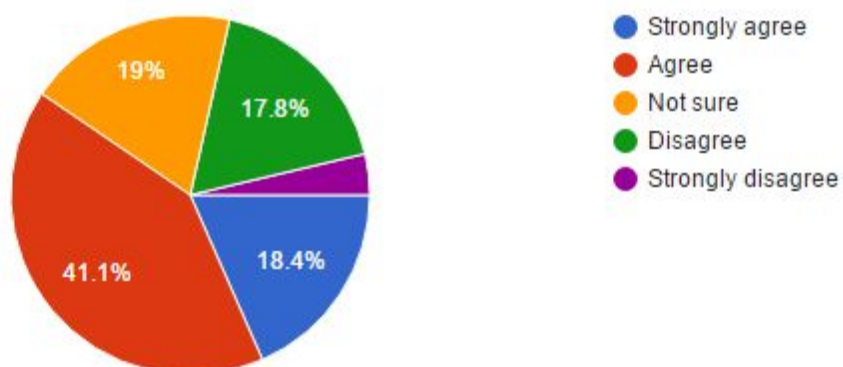


## We should depict our deities as a variety of ethnicities (164 responses)



On the next question, people pointed out (again quite rightly) that some religions are 'closed' (e.g. Voudun, Lucumi, Santeria) and would strongly discourage people from contacting their deities unless they are initiated into their traditions.

## Anyone can work with deities from any culture (163 responses)



One respondent commented:

Ethnicities - God/esses have ethnicities and we should respect that.

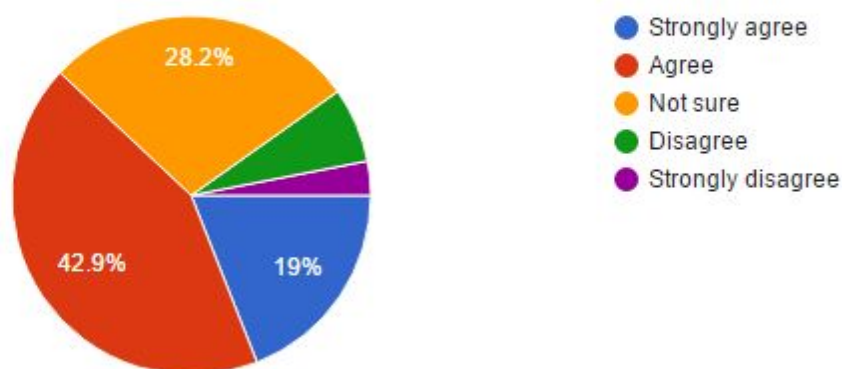
Cultures - Working with deities from other cultures is OK as long as you respect the boundaries imposed by those cultures and their forms of worship. Simply parachuting a deity in and treating it as a generic wiccan deity is not OK.

As it followed the previous two questions, the question on cultural appropriation received a similarly mixed response. One person commented about this question:

I'm a bit wary about the question about cultural appropriation. I didn't follow the discussion closely, but couldn't help but get the impression, some folks use the ban of something they call cultural appropriation as a rejection of multi-cultural society and cultural permeability - which would be bio-regionalism, which is a pseudo-scientific way of telling immigrants and people of mixed ancestry to get the fuck lost, so whether I agree depends on what's meant by cultural appropriation

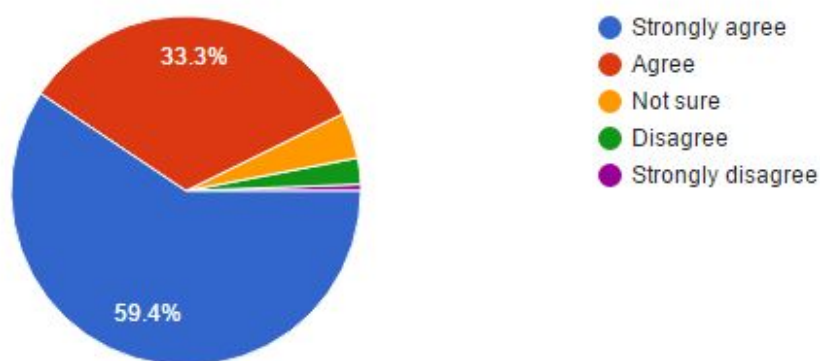
The commenter is quite right; there is indeed an issue of right-wingers and “folkish” pagans using the term cultural appropriation to justify excluding Black and minority ethnic (BME) people from their practice. However, cultural appropriation is when a more powerful culture takes rituals from a less powerful culture. Often the appropriating culture is one that has previously colonised the appropriated culture. Clearly that does not apply to a handful of BME people joining Heathenry or Asatru or similar groups.

### We should avoid cultural appropriation (163 responses)



The next question was more general, on celebrating diversity in our rituals and festivals. The majority of people agreed with this statement.

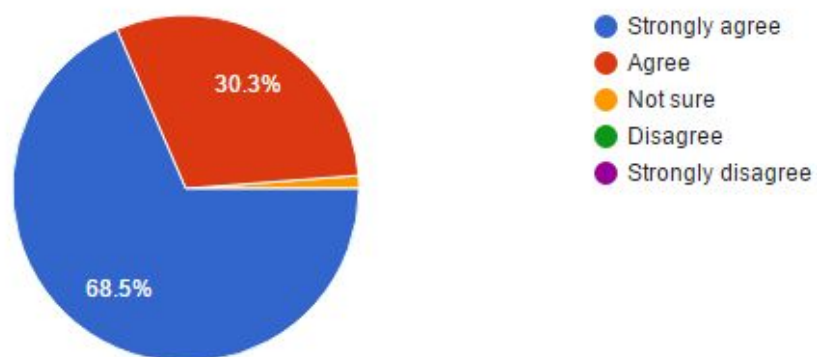
### Diversity has a place in celebration, theology and cosmology (165 responses)



Then there was a statement about how the views and contributions of new members are viewed. The vast majority agreed that they are valued.

## We value the views, contributions, and ideas of all the coven members

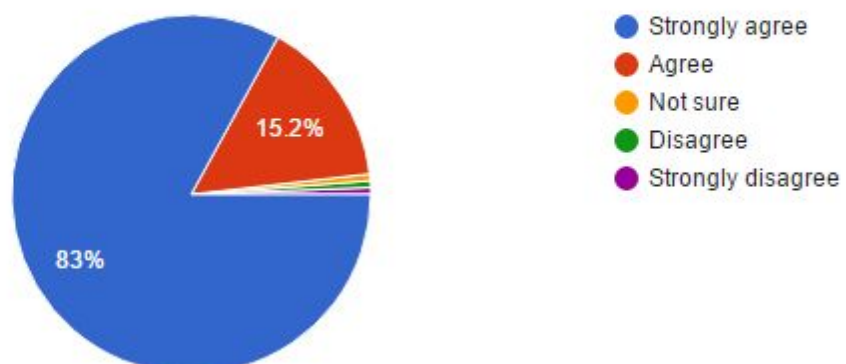
(165 responses)



The next question was on body-shaming and fat-shaming. Only 1 person disagreed, 1 strongly disagreed, and 1 was not sure, that it is unacceptable.

## Body-shaming / fat-shaming is unacceptable

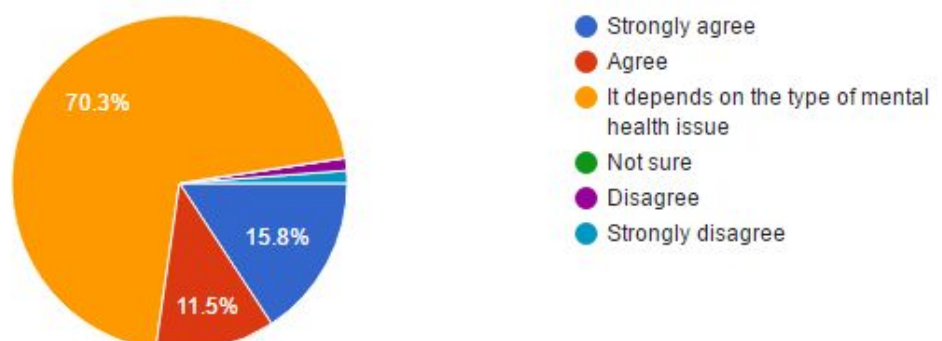
(165 responses)



People were much more ambivalent on the topic of mental health and Wicca. This needs further and more detailed research.

## People with a mental health issue can participate in Wicca

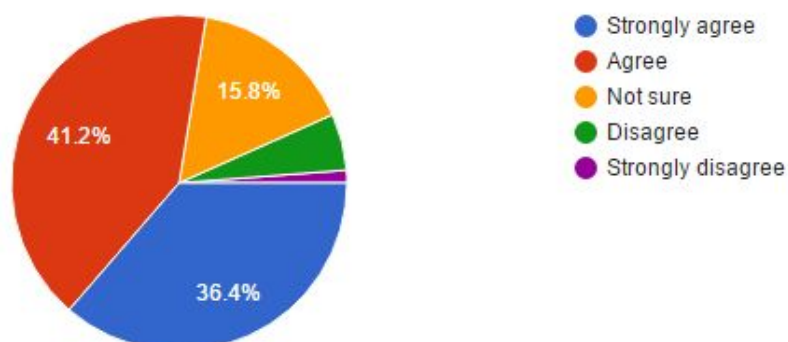
(165 responses)



However, people were willing to consider making adaptations for neurodivergent people. One person wrote in the comments that nothing needed adapting for this group. However, if you use a script for your rituals, or expect people to learn words off by heart, then there are adaptations to be made.

### Wiccan rites and practices may be adapted for neurodivergent people (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, Asperger's)

(165 responses)

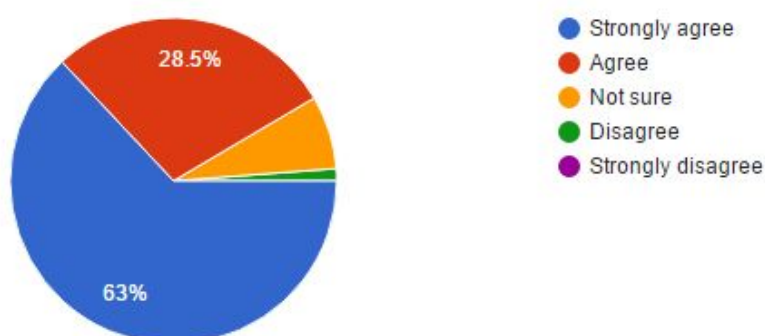


In the past, when I have argued that dyslexic people should not have to copy out the Book of Shadows by hand, there has been considerable resistance to this idea, so I am surprised, and cautiously heartened, that this area is now being considered. I am also aware of some covens with a huge reading list, which might disadvantage people with dyslexia.

The response to the last statement, on educational level and socio-economic class, was also overwhelmingly in favour of not discriminating. Again, it might be interesting to break this down into two questions, one about educational level, and the other about socio-economic class.

### Our coven members don't need to reach a particular educational level or belong to a particular socio-economic class

(165 responses)



## **Conclusions**

Wiccans are mostly quite a liberal bunch. However, there is a difference between the USA and the rest of the world in how same-sex initiation is viewed; and people are not quite sure how to deal with mental health issues.